



和月
伸宏

Rurouni Kenshin

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

11



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



IT'S BAZAAR

NOT THAT I FELL PREY TO THEIR "C JZAAR DE GOZARU" AD CAMPAIGN OR ANYTHING, BUT ABOUT HALF A YEAR AGO, I GAVE IN AND BOUGHT A PC. ONE YEAR TO E-MAIL-ONE YEAR TO WORD PROCESSING-ONE YEAR TO A GRAPHICS PAINT PROGRAM. THAT WAS THE PLAN...BUT, WHEN LAST SEEN, THE COMPUTER WAS STILL IN A CORNER OF THE STUDIO, COLLECTING DUST. CAST NOT GOLD COINS TO CATS, PEARLS BEFORE SWINE, OR PC'S TO WATSUKI-THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T UP ON YOUR TECHNOLOGY, JUST BE RE-A-A-ALLY SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO....

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in **Weekly Shonen Jump Special**. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing **Jump** series in 1994, **Rurouni Kenshin** ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of **Yahiko no Sakabatô** ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in **Weekly Shonen Jump**. His most current work, **Busô Renkin** ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in **Jump**.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 11: OVERTURE TO DESTRUCTION
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

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SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL



Rurouni Kenshin

**MEIJI
SWORDSMAN
ROMANTIC
STORY**

**Vol. 11:
OVERTURE
TO
DESTRUCTION**

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called *Battōsai*. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *ruromi*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.

Saito Hajime



Sagara Sanosuke

THUS FAR

Ōkubo Toshimichi, head of the government's "Internal Affairs," tries to hire Kenshin to assassinate Shishio Makoto, the successor to "Hitokiri Battōsai." But it is Ōkubo who is assassinated, and Kenshin sets out for Kyoto to find his killers. On the East Sea Road, Kenshin meets a girl named Misao and travels with her to a village occupied by Shishio's men—where he reconnects with Saitō Hajime, an intelligence agent for the police and ex-member of the Shinsengumi. There, they encounter Shishio himself, but the assassin refuses to fight Kenshin and vanishes. Behind him Shishio leaves *Sūjirō*—the "Sword of Heaven"—to fight, and Kenshin's *sakabatō* is shattered. Arriving in Kyoto, Kenshin asks the ex-Ōniwabanshū surrogate father of Misao to find the swordsmith, Arai Shakkū. But Shakkū is dead, and the sun who inherited his skills desires only peace and has abandoned the making of blades.

Chō, one of Shishio's *Jūppongatana* or "Ten Swords" assassins, kidnaps Seiki's son to force the handing-over of the final blade. Kenshin rescues the boy and draws Shakkū's last blade himself—seemingly about to break his vow never to kill—but the sword turns out to be another *sakabatō*! With the blade, "Shianchi," in hand, Kenshin leaves Ani-Ya to seek out the master of the Hiten Mitsurugi school, Hiko Seijirō. Asking to be taught the technique's final move, Kenshin is told that he does not "deserve" the secret. Just then, Yuhiko and Kaoru arrive on the scene, led by Misao....



神谷 薫

緋村 剣心 入斬り 抜刀 齋藤

Himura Kenshin (Hitokiri Battōsai)

Kamiya Kaoru

卷町 操

Makimachi Misao

Myojin Yuhiko

翁 (柏崎念主)

Okina (Kashiwazaki Nenji)

Hiko Seijuro

明神 弥彦

比古 清十郎

志々 雄 真実

Shishio Makoto

Shinomori Aoshi

四乃 森蒼紫

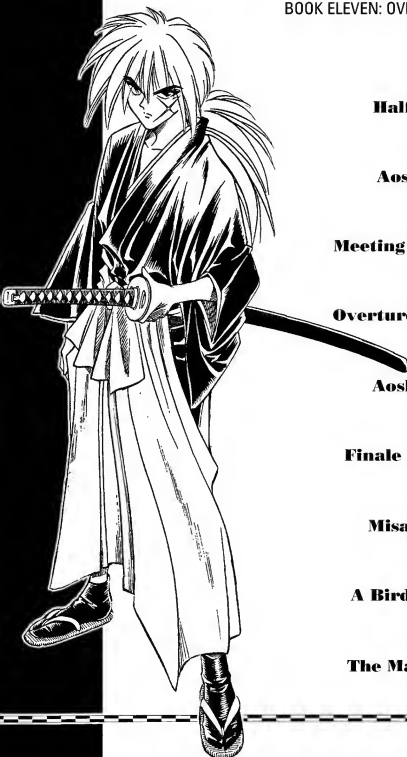
C
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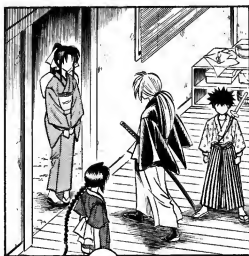
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Act 85

Half the Feeling













SO
WHAT?

FORTY-
THREE.



...MAY
I
SPEAK
?

JUMP
IN-
ANY-
TIME.

YEAH.
HE'S
28.

28?!

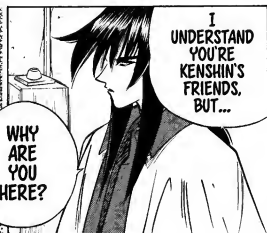
WAIT...IS
HIMURA
OLDER THAN
HE LOOKS,
TOO?

JUST LIKE
KENSIN!
WHAT IS IT
WITH HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...?

I GET IT—
HITEN
MITSURUGI
IS THE SECRET
TO ETERNAL
YOUTH!!

I'M GONNA
LEARN IT,
TOO!

EEEE



I
UNDERSTAND
YOU'RE
KENSIN'S
FRIENDS,
BUT...

WHY
ARE
YOU
HERE?







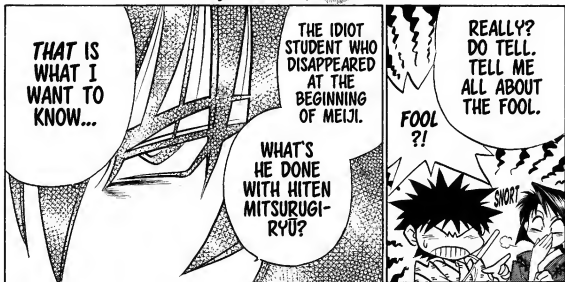
HEH

...FOR A
STUBBORN,
SELF-WILLED
MULE, THAT
IS.



THE
KENSIN
WE KNOW
IS NO
MULE!

MAYBE YOU
WERE HIS
MASTER—BUT
YOU HAVEN'T
KNOWN HIM
FOR YEARS!



THAT IS
WHAT I
WANT TO
KNOW...

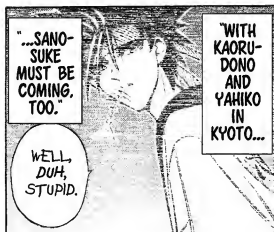
THE IDIOT
STUDENT WHO
DISAPPEARED
AT THE
BEGINNING
OF MEIJI.

WHAT'S
HE DONE
WITH HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ?

REALLY?
DO TELL.
TELL ME
ALL ABOUT
THE FOOL.

FOOL
?!

SHORT



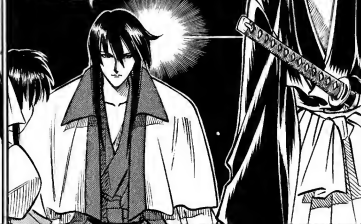


...OR
ARE YOU
ATONING
FOR ALL
THE DEATHS
YOU'VE
CAUSED?

DID YOU
FINALLY
INTERNALIZE
THE TEACHINGS
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI ON
YOUR OWN...

SO. FOR 10
YEARS, YOU'VE
BEEN WANDERING
THE COUNTRY,
AS RURONI,
HELPING PEOPLE.

WHERE
DO YOU
WANT
THE—?





IF THERE
ARE PEOPLE
CLEARLY
SUFFERING, FOR
WHATEVER
REASON, THEY
CANNOT BE
IGNORED.

ONE OTHER
THING WAS
SAID, BEFORE
WE FOUGHT
AND PARTED
15 YEARS
AGO.



BOTH
...

...MASTER.



THEN
COME!
I WILL
TEACH
YOU—



WHEN IT
MATTERS,
MY MULE
OF A
STUDENT
CAN TALK
LIKE A
MAN.

SO.

HEH

—HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYU'S
FINAL
SECRET!







ARE YOU
ANGRY...?

YOU TOLD
ME NOT TO
COME, BUT
I DID.

BUT THE
OTHER
HALF IS...

...KIND
OF
RELIEVED.

...HALF.





PROMISE
YOU'LL BE
CAREFUL.

THERE'S NO
TELLING WHERE
SHISHIO'S MEN
MAY BE
LURKING.

...I'M
WAITING
FOR YOU
TO TURN
AROUND
AND
SMILE...

KENSHIN...

NEVER
FEAR,
WE'RE
HERE!!

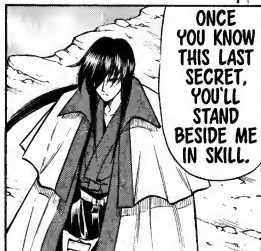


...BUT...

...BUT...



CHEE
CHEE
CHEE



ONCE
YOU KNOW
THIS LAST
SECRET,
YOU'LL
STAND
BESIDE ME
IN SKILL.



...

AROUND
MY ANKLES,
MAYBE.

...WELL,
MAYBE
NOT THAT
HIGH.



STILL,
DON'T LET
THAT MAKE
YOU OVER-
CONFIDENT!



BEFORE
WE BEGIN
OUR
TRAINING,
THERE'S
SOMETHING
I MUST
SAY.



THIS
SO-CALLED
"AGE OF MEIJI"
IS NOT SO
SIMPLE...

...THAT
ONE MAN'S
SELF-
SACRIFICE
CAN
SAVE IT.



...MASTER.

ARE
YOU
...?



BUT
NOTHING'S
THAT
SIMPLE,
IS IT.

NO
SKILL WILL
MAKE YOU
A GOD.

REMEMBER—
NO MATTER
HOW SKILLED
YOU BECOME,
YOU'RE STILL A
HUMAN
BEING.

KEEN

IF YOU
DIE FIGHTING
FOR THE
HAPPINESS OF
OTHERS, HOW
MISERABLE WILL
THAT GIRL WHO
CAME HERE
TO SEE
YOU BE?



HMM...



YOU'VE
BEEN
GROANING
FOR A
WHILE.

SOME-
THING
WRONG,
YAHIKO?

CONSTI-
PATED?



SHUT UP,
STUPID!

I WAS
S'POSED
TO TELL
KENSIN
SOME-
THING...

HMM
...



...OH!



OUR
TALK
IS
OVER.

NOW,
WE
BEGIN.

THAT
KILLER'S IN
KYOTO—AND
HE'S LOOKING
FOR KENHSIN!



IT'S
AOSHI!
SHINOMORI
AOSHI!!



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 86
Aoshi
&
Okina

仲宏
和月



SHINOMORI
AOSHI!



...HEAD...
OF THE
ONIWABAN-
SHŪ...?

"SHINO-
MORI"
AS IN...



I
KNOW
IT WAS
HIM!

I ONLY GOT
A GLIMPSE
THROUGH THE
CROWD, BUT—

GASP



HERE!
COMING
TO
KYOTO!!



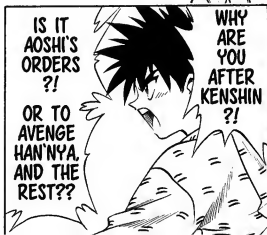


YAHIKO!

W
S
H

SHE'S ONE
OF THE
ONIWABANSHŪ!!

GET
BACK,
KAORU!



IS IT
AOSHI'S
ORDERS
?!

OR TO
AVENGE
HAN'NYA,
AND THE
REST??

WHY
ARE
YOU
AFTER
KENSIN
?!







THANKS TO
MISAO, I WAS
ABLE TO SEE
KENSIN
AGAIN. I
OWE HER.

KAORU-
SAN...!



KAORU!

WHAT
ARE YOU
THINKING
?!

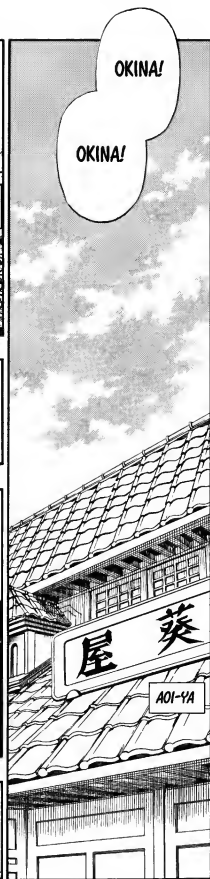


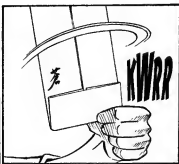
...AND I DIDN'T
SEE EVERYTHING
ON MY OWN, SO
A LOT OF THIS
IS SECOND-
HAND.

I DON'T
KNOW
SHINOMORI
AOSHI,
MYSELF...

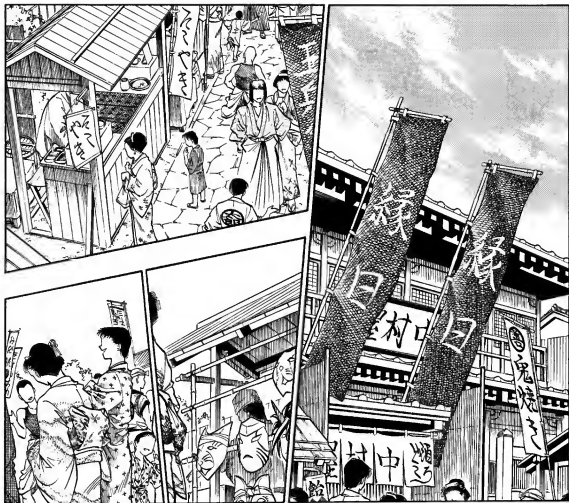


MISAO-
CHAN...THIS
MAY BE HARD
FOR YOU TO
HEAR.





ooo





IT'S JUST
THE TWO OF
US, SO I'LL
SKIP THE
POLITENESS.

LONG
TIME
NO SEE.

A WASTE
OF BOTH
OUR TIME.

PLEASE
DO.

...SORRY
FOR
THE
WAIT.

WHY DIDN'T
YOU STOP
BY
AOI-YA?

MISAO
WOULD'VE
LOVED TO
SEE YOU.







MISAO
RAN OFF
TO FIND
YOU.
HIMURA-
KUN
BROUGHT
HER BACK
TO KYOTO
SAFELY.

I
HEARD
IT ALL
FROM
HIMURA-
KUN
HIMSELF.

SLURP

OF
COURSE,
HE'S LEFT
AOI-YA
ALREADY. I
DON'T KNOW
WHERE
HE IS.

WAKE
UP.
KILLING
HIMURA-
KUN...

...WON'T
BRING BACK
HAN'NYA
OR THE
OTHERS.



...BUT
REST, FOR
YOUR
SOUL.

WHAT
YOU NEED
RIGHT
NOW ISN'T
ANOTHER
BATTLE...



AOSHI,
LISTEN.

WHY
DON'T YOU
LAY THE
BLADE
DOWN
FOR A
BIT.

KOP



...THE
BASE
OF THE
LIGHT-
HOUSE IS
DARK...





EVEN
WITHIN
THE ONI-
WABANSHŪ...

...NO
ONE
UNDER-
STANDS
HOW I
FEEL.



SSH

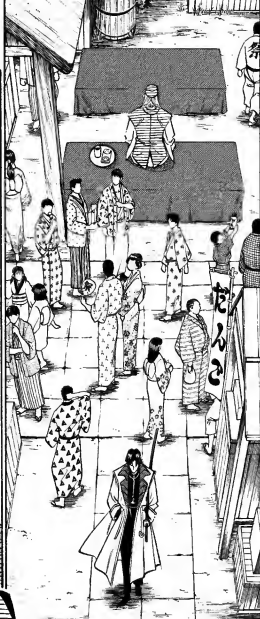


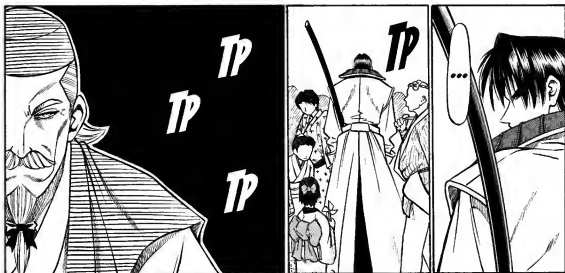
GNG

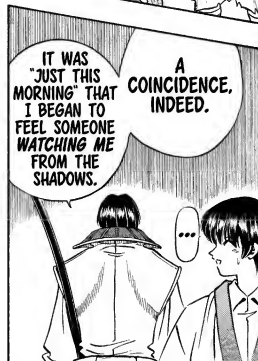


UNTIL WE
REGAIN THE
GLORY THAT
COMES WITH
BEING THE
BEST...

...MY
BATTLE
WILL NOT
END.











AS
YOU
WISH...

...I WILL
MEET WITH
SHISHIO
MAKOTO.

BUT OUR
INFORMATION
ISN'T BAD,
EITHER.

I THINK
IT SHOULD
BE WORTH
TAKING A
LOOK AT.

IT
SOUNDED
LIKE YOUR
TALK JUST
NOW WENT
BADLY.

IF YOU
FORGET THE
DIGNITY
OF THE
ONIWABANSHU...

...VERY
WELL.

LEAD
ON.

Rurouni Kenshin





FROM THE
CITY OF KYOTO,
UNDER THE
SKIES TO THE
NORTHEAST,
PAST THE
"DEMON GATE"...

...STANDS
MT. HIEI,
LEGENDARY
AS A SPIRITUAL
SITE. AND ON
ONE SHOULDER
OF IT...



HERE
IT IS.

Act 87—Meeting of the Warlords

PLEASE,
COME
IN.

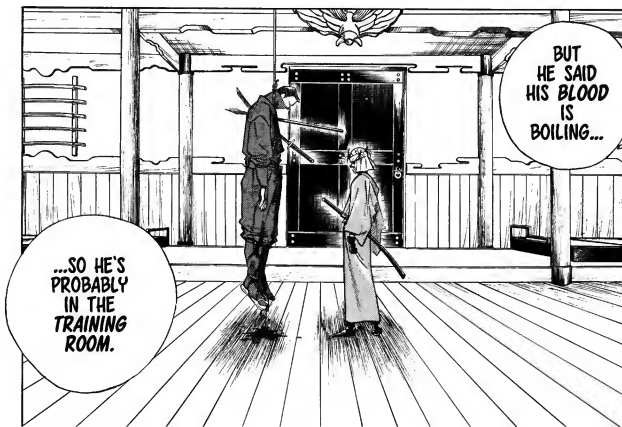
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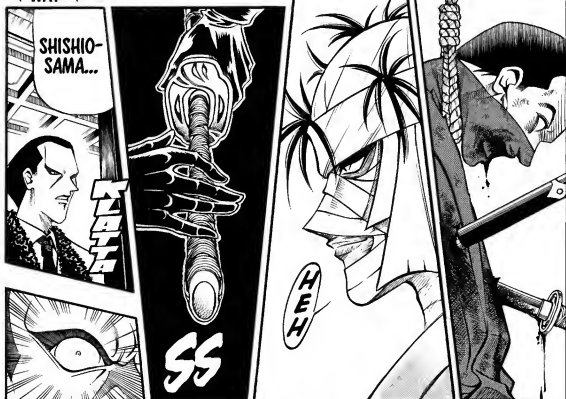
TK TK

仲
月
参

Act 87
**Meeting of
the Warlords**







Hey again, Watsuki here with another of his dopey sidebars. In "Secret Life of Characters" #20 (Volume 7), I briefly mentioned my collection of American-comics action figures. In my "X-Men" collection, I have only three more to go! Those three have been tough ones—not that they're terribly rare. It's all just for fun. I'm not at the point where I pay big money for any of it. The search is a part of it too, so I've been taking it slow. Recently I've begun to stray a bit and have started collecting "Spawn." The figures are a little more expensive than "X-Men" figures, but the craftsmanship is awesome—basically at "garage kit" level. They're popular, of course, and therefore hard to find, but I figure on tracking them down over the long haul. Speaking of good craftsmanship, there's now a stuffed Kenshin for those arcade "UFO Catcher" things. So far I've seen only a prototype, but it's worth a look (shameless plug). In a time when toys overflow the market, and instead of regretting your purchase 'cause it's this-or-that series, it's better to consult your wallet and buy only the stuff you think is worth it. There's a lot of "Rurōken" merchandising out there, but you'd still be smart to consider quality before shelling out.



NOT ONLY
COULDN'T I
SEE THE
BLADE, EVEN
HIS
MOVEMENT
WENT
UNSEEN.



OH!
...!



WHAT
...?



DID YOU
COME HERE
JUST TO SPY
ON MY
MOVES?



Y...
YES...

HAVE YOU
SOMETHING,
HÖJI,
OR...?



THE
FIRST
OF YOUR
SECRET
STRIKES-
"FLAMING
SOUL!"

NOW
THAT'S
BEEN A
WHILE...





NOW,
THEN...



I'VE COME
ONLY FOR
INFORMATION
ON
BATTOSAI.

SO
THERE'S
NO
MISUNDER-
STANDING.
I'LL TELL
YOU AT THE
START.



THE FIRST
STRANGER
HERE IS
YOU.
WELCOME.



...OF
JOINING
YOU.

I
HAVE
NO
INTEN-
TION...



I'VE NO
PROBLEM
WITH
THAT.

AH.



AND
THOSE
WHO WON'T
MINGLE
WITH
OTHERS...

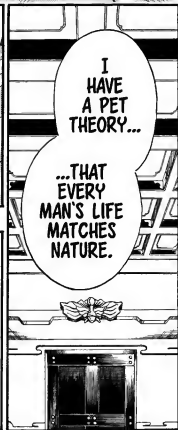
...TO
LIVE IN
SOLITUDE.



THERE
ARE
THOSE
WHO STAND
ATOP
OTHERS.



THOSE
WHO
FOLLOW
THEM.



I
HAVE
A PET
THEORY...

...THAT
EVERY
MAN'S LIFE
MATCHES
NATURE.

A LONE
WOLF WILL
LEAD TO THE
DESTRUCTION
OF ANY
ORGANIZATION.

I'VE NO
NEED OF
ONE LIKE
YOU AS A
SUBORDINATE.

SO
HOW
ABOUT
THIS...?

AND
YET, WE
LIKE YOU
AS YOU
ARE.

WE'LL
TELL YOU
ALL WE
KNOW OF
BATTŌSAI...

THAT
WILL
HELP US,
TOO.

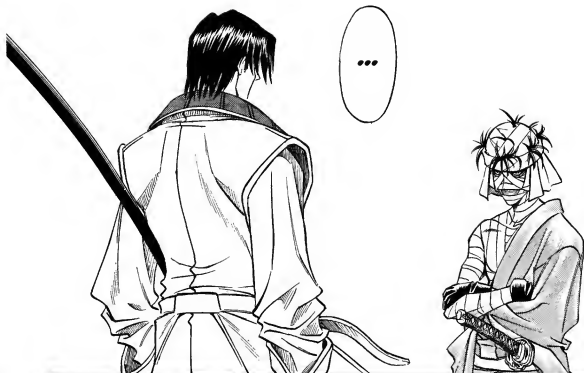
YOU CAN
FIGHT
BATTŌSAI
AS YOU
WISH.

JUST
THINK OF
IT AS A
PARALLEL.

YOU
DON'T
NEED TO
JOIN US.

DON'T
SKIP
AHEAD.

...IF I HELP
DEFEAT
BATTŌSAI
IN RETURN.



...DO YOU
KNOW OF
BATTŌSAI?

AND
WHAT...



THEN
THERE'S
NO
DEAL.

BEYOND
HIS BATTLE
WITH CHŌ,
NOTHING.



...THERE
IS ONE
THING.





IF WE ATTACK
AOI-YA AND
CONDUCT A
TORTURE OR
TWO...I'M SURE
HE'LL SAY
SOMETHING.



THE OLD
MAN YOU
WERE JUST
TALKING TO.



HE
DEFINITELY
HAD SOME
CONTACT
WITH
HIMURA.



HMM.



WELL,
THEN...



...WHAT
SHALL
WE DO?



AND
YOU'RE
SURE
THAT
YOU...?

YES.

MISAO
SLEEPING?



...SHE'LL
BE VERY
SAD IF
YOU'RE NOT
THERE.

WHEN
SHE
WAKES
IN THE
MORNING...



I'M LEAVING
MISAO TO
OKINA. DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT HER.



WHAT
OF THE REST
OF YOU, ARE
YOU SURE
THIS IS
WHAT...?



WE'RE
LOW-LIFES...
ALL WE CAN
DO IS
FIGHT.

IN THESE
TIMES OF
PEACE,
LOOKING FOR
TROUBLE
IS ALL
THAT'S
LEFT.



THERE'LL
BE NO
WORKING
WITH
CUSTOMERS
HERE.



WILL
YOU
STOP,
ALREADY?



NOT ONLY
THAT, WE'LL
BE IN
THE WAY.



IN
THAT
CASE...



LET THE
FIVE OF US
MARK THE
END OF THE
ONIWABANSHU—
GLORIOUSLY—



VERY
WELL. I'LL
SAY NO
MORE.

KILLING
BATTŌSAI
IS ALL I
EXIST FOR.

IT'S
ENOUGH
FOR ME.

—BY PROVING
OURSELVES
THE ULTIMATE
KILLERS.



ARE YOU
SURE,
SHISHIO-
SAMA?

MM?



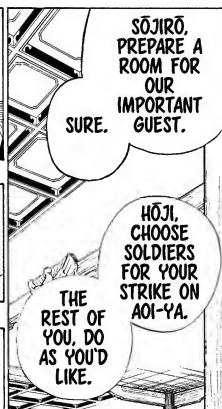
...TO ABANDON
HIS OLD
COMRADES
LIKE THAT...IT
MAKES HIM
TWISTED.

THE MAN
SEEMS
SKILLED,
YES, BUT...



AND
AREN'T
YOU?

!



SŌJIRO,
PREPARE A
ROOM FOR
OUR
IMPORTANT
GUEST.

SURE.

HŌJI,
CHOOSE
SOLDIERS
FOR YOUR
STRIKE ON
AOI-YA.

THE
REST OF
YOU, DO
AS YOU'D
LIKE.



THEN
IT'S
SETTLED.

HEH



IN THESE
TIMES OF
COMPROMISE...

...HOW
ELSE CAN
A WARRIOR
SURVIVE?

...YES.

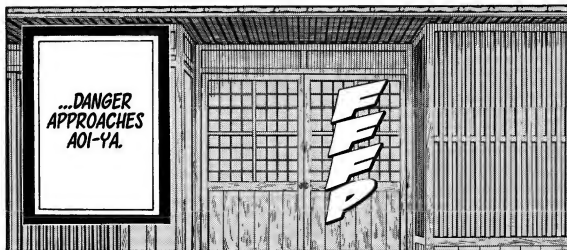


FAIR
ENOUGH.



AREN'T
ALL OF
US...

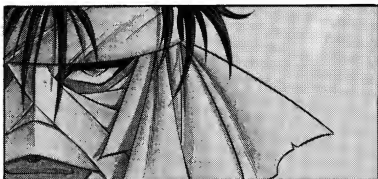
...JUST AS
TWISTED?



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 88—Overture to Destruction



THE RUIN
OF THE
ONIWABANSHŪ
ONMITSU—SLOWLY,
IT CREEPS
UP ON
AOI-YA...



WHILE...



Act 88—Overture to Destruction



GUH...



YOU
DEPEND
TOO
MUCH ON
REACTION
SPEED.



JUST
BECAUSE
I'VE
RAISED
MY
SWORD...

...DOESN'T
MEAN I'LL
SWING
IT.



SHISHIO'S
HANDS MAY
BE REACHING
FOR EVERYONE
AS WE
SPEAK.

I NEVER
IMAGINED
YOUR
SKILLS
COULD
BE THIS
RUSTY.

I WAS
RIGHT TO
TEST YOUR
STRENGTH
BEFORE-
HAND.

JUST
TEACH
ME
THE—

THERE
IS NO
TIME
FOR
THIS.

HM!



DRAWING
THE
SWORD
FROM A
DETACHED
SHEATH...

TWO-PART
BATTOJUTSU,
HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...
SŌRYŪSEN...
TWIN-DRAGON
SPARK!



THE FIRST
STRIKE—
WITH THE
SHEATH?!

!!





SŌRYŪSEN
IKAZUCHI—
TWIN-DRAGON
LIGHTNING!

双
龍
閃
・
雷

そら
りゅう
せん
いかづち

SO YOU
THOUGHT TO
ACQUIRE THE
ULTIMATE
TECHNIQUE
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...

...EH, MY
IDIOT
PUPIL?!



I REVERSED
MY BLADE
ON
PURPOSE.
HURRY UP
AND
STRIKE.

HM?
WHAT'S
WRONG.

FIRST,
LAND A
HIT ON
ME.

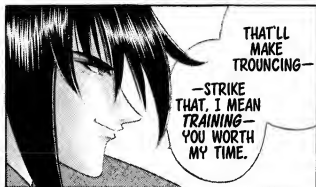
THEN
WE'LL
START
ON THE
SECRET.



...BUT
NOT
HIS
EYES.

HIS
MOVEMENTS
ARE
RUSTY...

HMF



IT'S JUST
AS WHEN
WE TRAINED
IN HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ.



...“OWL”
CLAN?



WE’VE
TRAINED
THOSE WITH
SUPERIOR
NIGHT-
VISION...

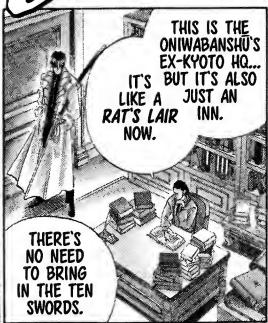


...INTO A
NIGHT-
RAIDING
UNIT...



OWLS ARE
MORE THAN
ENOUGH TO
HUNT RATS.

SHURU

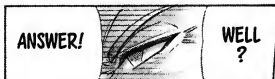


THIS IS THE
ONIWABANSHU’S
EX-KYOTO HQ...
BUT IT’S ALSO
JUST AN
INN.
LIKE A RAT’S LAIR
NOW.

THERE’S
NO NEED
TO BRING
IN THE TEN
SWORDS.







WHO
ARE
YOU—?

—THE
QUESTION
!!!

ANSWER—

SHING

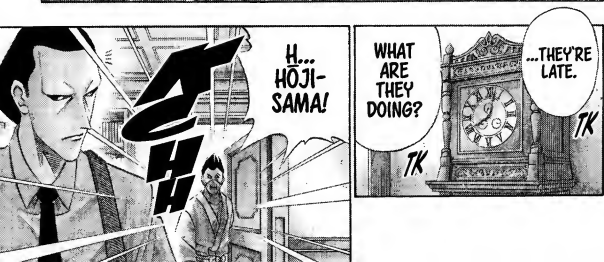
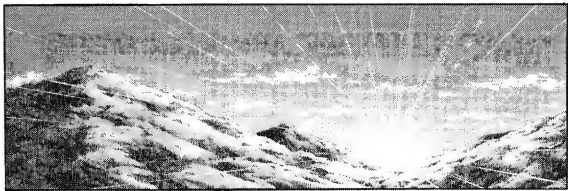
UH?

WELL?

DAMN!

SHIP







A...
AGH...



NOON. I AWAIT
YOU AT THE
USUAL PLACE.
COME ALONE.
-OKINA



IT...
CAN'T
BE.

THE OWL
CLAN...
ANNIHILATED
?

DM



Rurouni Kenshin



AOSHI

蒼紫

SHISHIO

志々雄

KENSHIN

剣心

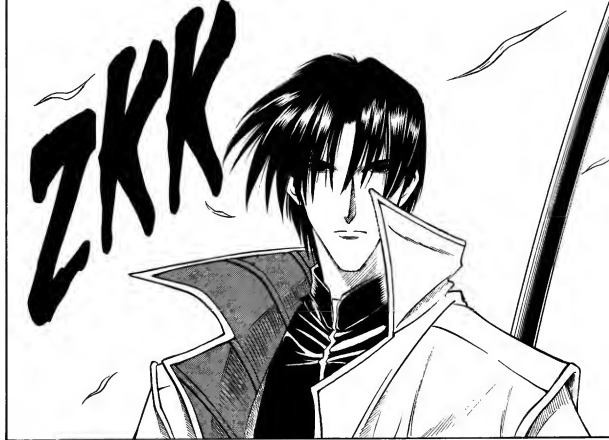
和仲
月宏

OKINA

翁

Act 89

Aoshi vs. Okina









IT'S
TRUE...

...ALL
FOUR
ARE
GONE.



BUT THIS
COULDN'T
HAVE COME
AT A
WORSE
TIME.



MISAO-
CHAN!

THEY
CAN'T
ALL BE
DEAD!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE
IT! I WON'T
BELIEVE
IT!!

SHINOMORI
AOSHI IS AFTER
KENSIN TO
PROVE THAT THE
ONIWABANSHU
ONMITSU ARE
THE "ULTIMATE."

KENSIN
KNOWS
ABOUT IT...I
GUESS IT'S
SOMETHING
HE HIMSELF
TOLD AOSHI
TO DO.

THE
OLD MAN'S
INFORMATION
NETWORK
WILL KNOW
IF IT'S TRUE
OR NOT!

OKINA!

葵屋 料亭

OKINA!

B
N
N
N

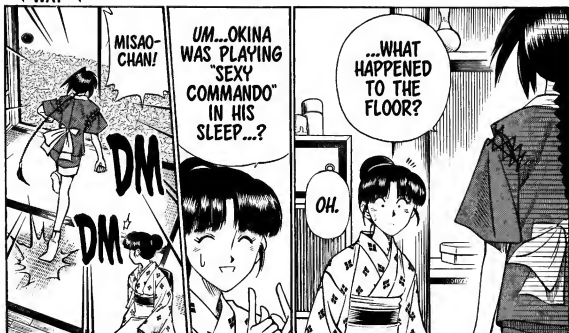
WHERE'S
THE OLD
MAN?!

HUH
?

MISAO-
CHAN?

HE'S...
OUT FOR A
BIT...

OH, YES.
OKINA.





...HIS
OLD
SHINOBI
OUTFIT!

IT CAN'T
BE FOR
NOTHING
IF THE
OLD MAN'S
BROUGHT
OUT...



THE PLANS
TO BRING
DOWN OUR
FORMER
COMRADE...

ARE
YOU
READY,
AOSHI?

...ARE IN
PLACE.

YES...







NO.

GOOD
PEOPLE
AND BAD,
WE'RE ALL
JUST
LUMPS OF
MEAT.
WHEN WE
DIE, WE
ALL ROT
EQUALLY.

HELL...
YOU
SAY?

MM.

DO YOU
BELIEVE
IN HELL?

BY
THE
WAY,
HŌJI...

YES?

...THE TRUTH
IS, I DO
BELIEVE IN
HELL.

THAT'S JUST
LIKE YOU TO
THINK SO
PRAG-
MATICALLY.

...STILL
...

THE MEN
OF THE MEIJI
GOVERNMENT
ENGULFED ME IN
FLAMES IN ORDER
TO HIDE
THEIR OWN
EVILDOINGS.

AS AN
ASSASSIN,
HIMURA
BATTŌSAI
BECAME A
LEGEND.

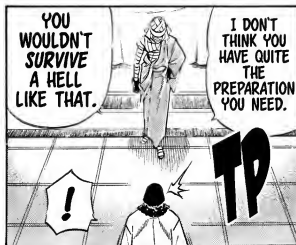
SHINOMORI
AOSHI SAYS HE
EXISTS ONLY TO
KILL BATTŌSAI. AND
OKINA DROPPED
HIS GRANDFATHERLY
MASK TO DESTROY
AOSHI.

HM
?



...DESERVES
TO BE
CALLED HELL,
DON'T YOU
THINK?

THIS
WORLD,
WHERE THE
DEVILS
SWARM,
WASHING
BLOOD
WITH
BLOOD...



YOU
WOULDN'T
SURVIVE
A HELL
LIKE THAT.

I DON'T
THINK YOU
HAVE QUITE
THE
PREPARATION
YOU NEED.

TP



BRRR



...IS TO BE
BAPTIZED.

HŌJI,
WHAT
YOU
NEED...



**AOSHI,
LET'S
GO!!**

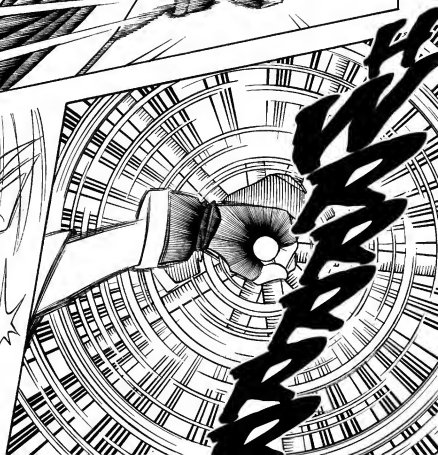


SOME-
THING
HIDDEN
IN HIS
SLEEVES—

!

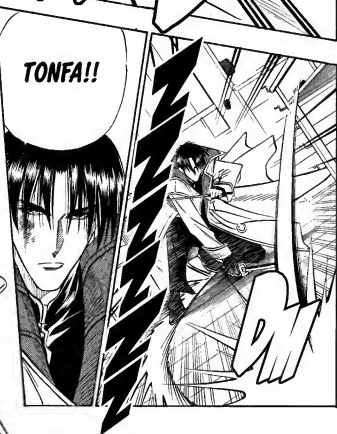


NNGH!!





TONFA!!







YOU'RE VERY
ADEPT AT THAT.
CONFUSING YOUR
OPPONENT'S
VISION BY MIXING
SLOW AND
RAPID MOTIONS.

RYŪSUI NO
UGOKI—"FLOW
OF THE RIVER-
CURRENT."



THERE!

GRIP

BUT,
HOWEVER YOU
MOVE AROUND,
DO YOU THINK
I WOULD—

—MISS THE
MOMENT YOU
MOVE INTO
YOUR ATTACK?



HAH
!!!



MG!



SHADOW
LIGHT
CROSS!

KODACHI
NITO-RYU...

おん
みよう
こう
さ
陰陽交叉

こ
だち
に
とう
りゅう
小太刀二刀流

...OF THE
FORMER
OKASHIRA.
THAT
DOESN'T
WORK.

BUT IT
IS THE
NITO-
RYO...

KLATA KLATA

KONG

KAK

...OR
HIMURA
BATTOSAI
...

WHETHER
IT BE
STEEL, A
FORMER
COMRADE...

...WILL
NOT
SLICE.

THERE'S
NOTHING
MY DUAL-
KODACHI...

Rurouni Kenshin

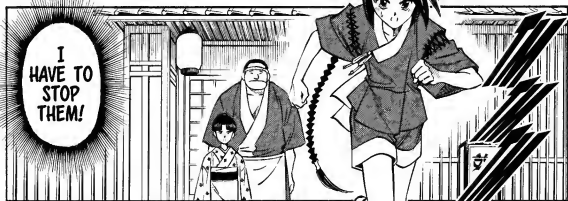


THAT'S
WHERE THE
OLD MAN AND
AOSHI-SAMA
ARE
FIGHTING!

THE
PLACE OF
SIGHT!



I
HAVE TO
STOP
THEM!



I HAVE
TO STOP
THEM, NO
MATTER
WHAT!

IF THEY
FIGHT
FOR REAL,
THEY'RE
BOTH
GOING TO
DIE!



Act 90—Finale of Fresh Blood

BUT I
HAVE TO
LET HER DO
EVERYTHING
SHE CAN.

SHE
WON'T
MAKE IT
IN TIME.



...I
KNOW.

SHOULD
YOU LET...?
THEY'LL...



Act 90

Finale of Fresh Blood

THE
PERSON
SHE
ADMIRE
S MOST,
AND THE
PERSON
SHE
LOVES
MOST...

...EITHER
WAY,
SHE'LL
LOSE
ONE OF
THEM.

和伸
月宏



HE TURNED
HIMSELF INTO
A DEVIL BY
CASTING OUT
HIS EMOTIONS...
AND SO DREW
OUT ALL HIS
POTENTIAL
POWERS.



HMPH.

HE'S
GOOD! NO
COMPARISON
TO THE
AOSHI I
KNEW.

...I
WILL
END IT
HERE.

TELL ME
WHERE
BATTŌSAI
IS, OKINA.
THEN...



SHH...



...UNLIKE
YOU...WILL
NEVER
SELL HIS
COMRADES...

...TO
THE
ENEMY!

I MAY
BE AN
OLD
SOLDIER.
BUT
OKINA
OF THE
ONIWABAN-
SHU...

...YOU
TAKE
ME
LIGHTLY.

I'LL
DEFEAT
YOU
HERE.

THEN I'LL
GO TO AOI-YA
AND QUESTION
THE FOUR
HIDING
THERE.

ALL
RIGHT.

ZZK
ZZK
ZZK



AND I...
WILL NOT...
LET YOU!!

ZWW...

AOSHI, ALREADY
YOUR STRENGTH IS
FAR BEYOND THAT
OF THE PREVIOUS
OKASHIRA.

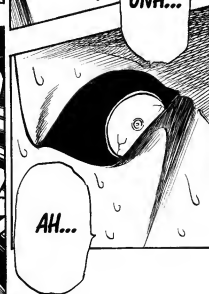
—DEFEAT
YOU
HERE.

BUT,
BECAUSE
OF THAT,
I MUST—
EVEN IF
IT COSTS
MY LIFE—

...AND TO
PROTECT
JAPAN FROM
THE DEVIL
SHISHIO.

FOR
HIMURA-
KUN...





WH-
WHAT
IS
THIS?!

HOW...
CAN A MAN
BE SO...SO
HOT...?!

SHUOO

SHUOO

...EVERY
SWEAT DUCT
IN ME WAS
DESTROYED.

TEN YEARS
AGO, WHEN MY
WHOLE BODY
WAS BURNED...

MY
DOCTORS SAY
THAT MY BODY
TEMPERATURE IS
INCOMPATIBLE
WITH LIFE.

I'VE NEVER BEEN
ABLE TO REGULATE
MY TEMPERATURE
THROUGH SWEATING
SINCE.

...LINGERS
THE HEAT
OF INFERNAL
FLAMES.

IN MY
BODY...

!!!

The other day, after work, I had some time before my train, so I went to a karaoke bar with the assistants. Watsuki's not much good at karaoke, but he does like to sing (and hum songs in the bath... badly). So I was pretty excited...but then it turned out the assistants were really, really good.

There were guys who could sing the current hits exactly right, and guys who sang with such sweet voices, women were swooning. And my senpai—he was like a pro! Not many can sing Yashiki Takajin like him (not many can sing Yashiki Takajin, period).

Most amazing was the youngest on the staff, my 2nd senior assistant. Okay, so, his actual singing sucked...but the way he sang, that was hilarious. He was like a manga character. It was fun to see another side of the assistants, a side none of them show at work. "I have a great staff," I thought, and realized that listening to them was more of a stress-reliever and more enjoyable than singing myself would have been. I'm definitely up for karaoke again.



**EVERY MAN IS TRULY
A DEVIL. AND THIS
WORLD IS HELL ITSELF.**



**"A
NATION
WHERE
ONLY THE
DEVILS
DESERVE
TO LIVE..."**



**BOTH
ARE SMALL,
AND BOTH
ARE WEAK.**



**HIMURA
BATTOSAI IS
DENYING HIS
TRUE NATURE,
CLINGING TO
DELUSIONS.**

**"...NOW
THAT IS
A MUCH
MORE
FITTING
HELL."**



**WITHIN
THE FLAMES,
THE VOICE
ROUGHENS.**

**"THIS
IS
NOT
RIGHT."**

**THE
GOVERNMENT
TRIES TO
CONCEAL ITS
EVILDOINGS AND
DECEIVE PEOPLE
THAT THIS MEIJI
JAPAN IS AN
IDEAL COUNTRY.**



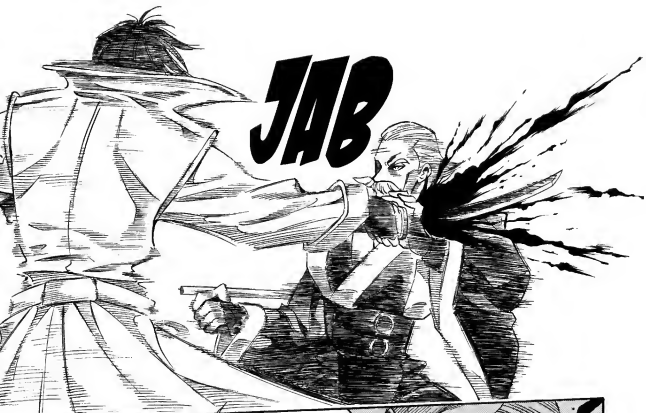


WAAAAH!!



IT'S NO
USE. YOU
HAVE NO
CHANCE
OF
WINNING
WITH JUST
ONE
TONFA.





円殺轟鉤棍
えんせうこうこう

DEADLY
STEEL
SPIRAL!

WHAT'S
THAT
...?!

!

REVERSE
HOLD
ON THE
KODACHI!!

KODACHI...

...KAITEN-
KEN!

TH-
THIS
FORM
IS THE
MOVE...

...NITŌ-
RYŪ...

...SIX
SUCCESSIONS!

ろく
れん
六連

SPIRAL
SWORD-
DANCE...

けん
回天
舞
天



SM!

...I'M...

...HERE...

HH





The Secret Life of Characters (31) —Okina (Kashiwazaki Nenji)—

There's no specific model in terms of personality—he's simply Watsuki's image of what an "old soldier" would be.

By nature a gentle, run-down-at-the-seams old man, when the younger generation gets confused, or does something wrong, Okina summons up his powers and sets those young'uns straight. Maybe that's the typical old man of a generation ago in Japan...? When I think about it now, I suppose there's a bit of "Kohel" from Ikenami Shōtarō's "*Kenkyaku Shōbai* (The Sword Trade)" in him.

This "Aoshi vs. Okina" story arc and the alliance between Aoshi and Shishio may have come as a surprise to many readers. The plot twist was actually sparked by a comment in a letter I received, saying, "I'll bet Aoshi is gonna be another of those characters who *just* happens to be around to help Kenshin in times of need." When I read that, it kind of got to me, and I said to myself, "Fine, then, I'll make him a bad guy." As a result, the already-long Kyoto Saga became even longer, so now I'm regretting it a bit....

As for Okina, I like him a lot since he's a character who's been able to tie up loose ends. Design-wise, his model is "Kaizō Tokijirō" in my master Obata Takeshi's "*Cyborg Ji'i-chan 'G'* (Cyborg Grandpa 'G')." Learning from his past misdeeds, Watsuki has been very careful to make certain his design doesn't resemble it too much, but still the assistants guessed right away (but then, they're all too clever for their own good).

One thing I'm not satisfied with is Okina's hair. It was supposed to stand up when he's really angry—making him resemble Sally's dad from the anime—but, because of a lack of available pages, this hasn't ended up coming across too well.



Act 91

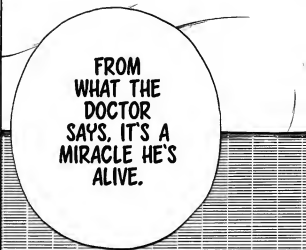
Misao's Decision

RUROUNI KENSHIN

MAKIMACHI MISAO

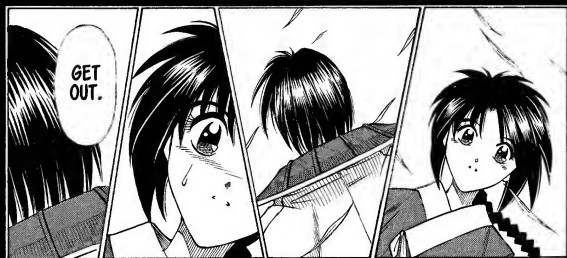
るるろん 剣心
巻目標





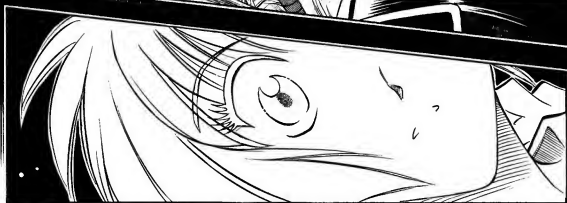


IT'S
OVER.





NEVER
SHOW
YOUR
FACE IN
FRONT
OF ME
AGAIN.





SHUT UP, ALL OF YOU!!





AND
WHERE'S MISAO
?!

SHE
WENT
TO
STOP
THEM.



BUT
EVEN
WITH HER
SPEED...



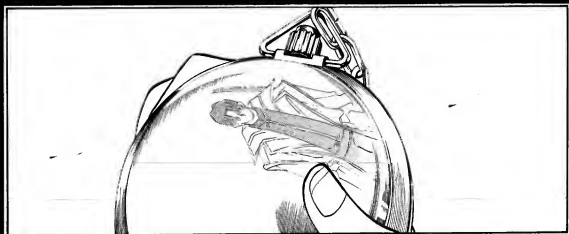
...IT MUST
HAVE BEEN
DECIDED
BY NOW.

KLIK



SHINOMORI
AOSHI AND
THE OLD
MAN—
HERE?!

SHE CAN
WAIT A
BIT TO
HEAR WHAT
HAPPENED
NEXT.



...OF
HIMURA
BATTOSAI'S
WHERE-
ABOUTS.

YOU
ALL
KNOW
...

...HERE,
MEANING
THAT...

O-OKASHIRA...

IF...
OKINA
CAN'T
BEAT
HIM...

...THEN
EVEN
ALL
OF US
TOGETHER...

WHAT
DO
WE
DO...?

...OR
I WILL
KILL
YOU.

ANSWER
...

OKINA...

YOU'VE
HIT A
NEW
LOW.

SHINOMORI
AOSHI.



In the end, we come back to video games—what else? Mainly, for me it's combat games. As said last time, I'm now on "Vampire Hunter" and "Samurai Spirits: Zankurō Musōken." In "Vampire Hunter," I recently played Gallon. I used the beast cannon over and over—it feels pretty good when it works. My main character's Morrigan, though, of course. For "Samurai Spirits," I'm Shura-mode Genjūrō, all the way. I finished Level 1 the other day, so now I'm trying to beat Level 2 in "Swordsman" mode. At first, it didn't go so well, but once I got the hang of the special move "Reiha," the rest was pretty easy. I still think the balance is a bit off (setting aside the fact that I probably just suck), and I do try not to depend on "Reiha" too much.

I'm working hard on getting triple-kills, or five kills in a row, and before anyone points out that I have time for video games even though I'm always complaining about not having time to write, keep in mind that, for me, being able to play 2–3 hours a week is still a pretty good week. Some weeks, I can't even play at all. I haven't gotten to "Tekken 2," for example, even though I've already bought it. And since a 3-D game is different from a 2-D game, it'll be a while before I can enjoy it—and then I'll be back to "Vampire Hunter" and "Samurai Spirits" again. The assistants have played "Tekken 2," at least, so I've been able to see all the endings (sure, maybe that's not how you're supposed to do it, but the opposing lives of "King" and "Armor King" are to die for—those two are so cool!). I know that, to those who haven't played the game, this is a complete nonsense, so I guess I'd better sign off. See you next volume.

和伸
月宏

YOU
ALSO
KNOW OF
BATTOSAI'S
WHERE-
ABOUTS.

YOU
ARE
BOLD,
AS
USUAL.



I WON'T
TELL, EVEN
IF YOU
KILL ME.

I DO KNOW.
BUT KENSHIN'S
IN THE
MIDDLE OF
IMPORTANT
TRAINING.



DON'T
WASTE
YOUR
SWORD
UNTIL
THEN.

JUST AS
YAHIKO
SAYS.

AND
HE'LL
FINISH
YOU,
TOO!

LISTEN!!
YOU DON'T
HAVE TO
GO LOOKING
FOR HIM—
HE'S COMING
BACK TO
SETTLE
WITH
YOU!





...MY
ONLY
GOAL IS
TO KILL
BATTŌSAI.

CURSED
SWORD
OR
NOT...

CONVEY
THAT TO
BATTŌSAI.

I'LL BE
WAITING
IN
SHISHIO'S
LAIR.



THE
SWORD YOU
SWING NOW
IS A
CURSED
SWORD.

IT
MAKES
EVERYONE
UNHAPPY,
WITH EVERY
SWING.



I
WONDER
WHAT WILL
HAPPEN
FROM
HERE...

AOSHI-
SAMA HAS
FALLEN
ONTO THE
DEVIL'S PATH
COMPLETELY.

DUNNO.



LET'S
JUST WAIT
FOR MISAO
TO PULL
HERSELF
TOGETHER.



IT'S OKINA'S LETTER.
HE WANTED YOU
TO HAVE IT...

...IN
CASE
ANY-
THING...



TO MISAO



CIAO
MISAO

ちや
お
♡
探
あし
おま
い

MY
BELOVED

MY
PRETTY

BUT THERE IS
NO NEED TO
MOURN. AS I WAS
PREPARING TO
DEFEAT THE ENEMY,
I ALSO WAS
PREPARING TO BE
DEFEATED.



CIAO MISAO♡
(MY BELOVED, MY
PRETTY). IF YOU
ARE READING
THIS, I PRESUME
I AM ALREADY
NOT OF THIS
WORLD.

FORGET ABOUT
ONIWABANSHŪ AND
AOSHI. GO BACK TO
BEING A NORMAL
GIRL WITH A
NORMAL LIFE, AND
FIND YOUR OWN
HAPPINESS.

LEAVE THE
REST TO
HIMURA-KUN,
AND REMOVE
YOURSELF
FROM THIS
DANGEROUS
LIFE.



THE ONI-
WABANSHŪ
ONMITSU
WILL
DISBAND,
AS OF
TODAY.



ALL YOU
MEN, FACE
THE OTHER
WAY!

WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
CRAZY
ABOUT?!

MISAO,
STOP! IT
ISN'T LADY-
LIKE!!

SCRAMBLE
SCRAMBLE





SHINOBI...
OUTFIT?

MISAO-
CHAN...?



...OLD
MAN.

SORRY
...

MY HEART
HAS AND
ALWAYS WILL
BE THE ONI-
WABANSHŪ'S!

ALL RIGHT,
EVERYONE. THE
ONIWABANSHŪ
IS THE SAME
AS BEFORE.

WE WILL
BE HIMURA'S
STRENGTH, AND
END SHISHIO'S
MAD AMBITION.

I WAS
BORN AND
RAISED BY THE
ONIWABANSHŪ.
THE MEMBERS ARE
FAMILY AND FRIENDS
I CAN'T REPLACE
WITH ANYONE
ELSE.



WHAT?!



WHOEVER
THE ENEMY
WILL BE...
EVEN AOSHI-
SAMA...

...YES, EVEN
IF IT IS
SHINOMORI
AOSHI...I
WILL DEFEAT
THEM!!



I WON'T
LET
ANYONE
ELSE DIE.

I WILL
PROTECT
THE ONI-
WABANSŪ.



...I AM
THE NEW
OKASHIRA
!!

STARTING
TODAY,
REPLACING
SHINOMORI
AOSHI..



DING!

KID

BE

TO

GOT

YOU!

WHAAAAAAT?

I'M NOT
"MISAO"! FROM
NOW ON, I'M
THE OKASHIRA!!

IT'S TRUE,
MISAO-CHAN,
YOU NEED TO
STAY CALM—

THIS IS
CRAZY! DON'T
EVEN TRY IT!!



MUST'VE
BEEN A
LONG TRIP.

I WAS
WORRIED.
YOU TOOK
LONGER
THAN
PLANNED.

—A
POLICE DEPART-
MENT
IN
KYOTO—

THERE
WAS...AN
INCIDENT.





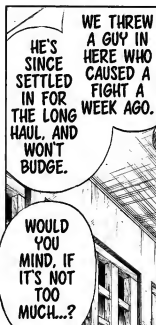
ALSO,
CHIEF...

WHERE
IS THIS
SWORDSMAN
OF SHISHIO'S
YOU'VE
CAUGHT?

OH,
YEAH. HE'S
THERE AT
THE VERY
END.



HOLD
ON A
MINUTE,
FUJITA.



HE'S
SINCE
SETTLED
IN FOR
THE LONG
HAUL, AND
WON'T
BUDGE.

WE THREW
A GUY IN
HERE WHO
CAUSED A
FIGHT A
WEEK AGO.

CAN I ASK
YOU A
FAVOR
FIRST?

WOULD
YOU
MIND, IF
IT'S NOT
TOO
MUCH...?



I FIGURED
THIS WOULD
BE THE
QUICKEST
ROUTE TO
KENSHIN.

ALL THE
SEARCHING I
COULD HAVE
DONE...AND I GET
A HOLD OF YOU
BY VISITING A
JAIL.

YOU...

HEH HEH.
JUST AS I
THOUGHT.

SAGARA
SANOSUKE
MAKES HIS
BIG KYOTO
ENTRANCE!

HEH

THAT'S
RIGHT.

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 92
**A Bird and
a Broom**

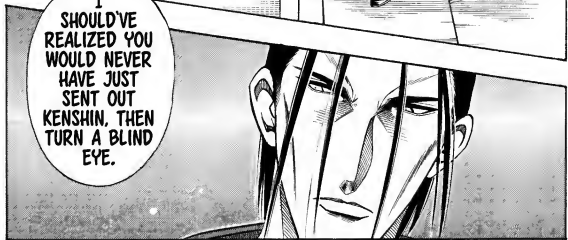


RUROUNI KENSHIN

SAGARA SANOSUKE



I
SHOULD'VE
REALIZED YOU
WOULD NEVER
HAVE JUST
SENT OUT
KENSIN, THEN
TURN A BLIND
EYE.





I GOT LOST AT
ONE POINT, HAD
SOME STUFF
POINTED OUT TO
ME. IT WAS
TOUGH.

WHAT,
NOT
HAPPY
TO SEE
ME?

I GOT HERE
WALKING THE
TREACHEROUS
NAKASEN ROAD,
TRAINING ALL
THE WHILE.

HENSHIN,
NOW...HE
TOOK THE
EASIER EAST
SEA ROAD, SO
SUCK ON THAT
BEFORE YOU
START POINTING
FINGERS,
HUH?

JAB

ZP

BETCHA
CAN'T WAIT
TO TASTE
THE FRUITS
OF MY
TRAINING!!

SO
HOW
NOW,
SAITŌ
!!

HAHAHA!

NEVER
SEEN
HIM.

NO.

...SAITŌ?
YOU
KNOW
HIM?





SEE?

TOLD
YA.

...AND I'LL
BUST YOU
DOWN, JUST
AS EASY.

TAKE ME
FOR THE
SAME AS
BEFORE...



GO ON
AND
WAIT
UP-
STAIRS.

LEAVE
HIM
TO ME.



...CHIEF.

WHY,
YOU...!

WITH AS
MUCH AS I
HAVE TO
ASK
YOU...

...STILL
SETTLING
OUR SCORE
FROM TOKYO
COMES
FIRST.

-HEY.

HEH-
LOH!!

...I SEE. THE
CONCEPT IS
LIKE "SUKASHI"
IN KARATE.

OF
COURSE,
THE FORCE
IS
TOTALLY
DIFFERENT
...







**FIGHT!
FIGHT!!
FIGHT
ME!!**

**ARGH!
DAMMIT,
THAT'S NO
GOOD!!**

...HM?



THE MAN
BATTŌSAI
CAPTURED
SOON AFTER
HIS ARRIVAL
IN KYOTO—

**K
R
E
E**



...OF
COURSE.
THE MAN
IN THERE
IS NOW
THE
BIGGEST
DANGER
HERE.

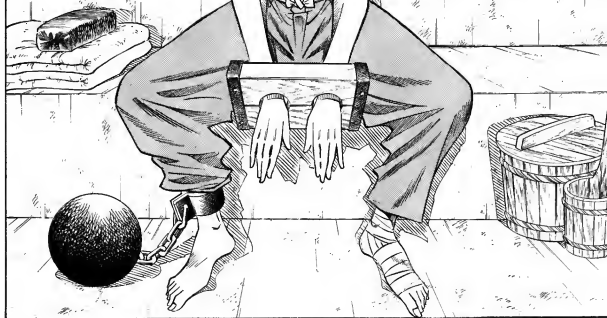
WHY IS THAT
ONE DOOR
SO MUCH
STURDIER
THAN THE
REST...?



TO WIT,
"SWORD
HUNTER"
CHŌ.

THE
SPECIAL
UNIT
DIRECTLY
UNDER
SHISHIO...

...ONE
OF HIS
"JUPPONGATANA"
TEN SWORDS.

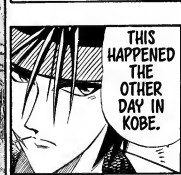


CAN'T YOU
KEEP IT
DOWN?

I WAS
HAVING
A NICE
NAP.

SMIRK

...YOU
TWO WERE
PRETTY
ROWDY OUT
THERE.



SO YOU
WON'T BE
SERIOUS.

...HE
COULD
EAT 50
GUYS FOR
BREAKFAST.

OL' CHŌ
HERE,
RIGHT
BEFORE
YOUR
EYES...

I'M HURT.
I AM BEING
SERIOUS!

HEH

EVEN IF YOU
ARE RELEASED,
NO WAY THEY
LET AN IDIOT
WHO GETS
CAUGHT BY THE
ENEMY GO
FREE.

IN
OTHER
WORDS
...
...YOU'RE
AFRAID
OF
SHISHIO.

PASS.
NEVER LIKED
IT MUCH
OUTSIDE,
ANYWAY.

I COULD
PULL THE
RIGHT STRINGS
AND HAVE YOU
RELEASED...WITH
THE RIGHT
ANSWERS.

RIGHT
NOW, THERE'S
NO SAFER
PLACE TO
BE.



420



YOU'RE
THE
ONE WHO'S
OBNOXIOUS.

WHO IS THIS
BIRD-
HEAD?!

JUST A
BROOM-
HEAD
COWARD,
SQUAWKING
AWAY.

HE'S OB-
NOXIOUS.



YOUR
LUCK'S
RUN
OUT.

PUH

SNAP

BORES...!

I'M NOT
AFRAID OF
SHISHIO-SAMA...
OR DEATH,
EITHER.

WHAT'S
SCARY IS
BEING
ORDERED
AROUND
BY BORES
LIKE YOU.

I'VE BEEN
IN A BAD
MOOD EVER
SINCE I
GOT TO
KYOTO.





...LET'S HAVE
IT OUT
IN A
STRAIGHT-UP
FIGHT, BROOM-
HEAD!!

WHETHER
I'M
"BORING"
OR NOT...

THAT'S
JUST
FINE
WITH
ME...

...BIRD-
HEAD!!



BUT NO
CRYING
AFTER I
BEAT YOU
TO A
BLOODY
PULP!



ALL RIGHT.
YOU WIN.
AND I'LL
ANSWER
YOUR
QUESTIONS.



BIRD
!
BIRD
!
BROOM
!
BROOM
!



ORAAAH!!

**I
TOLD
YOU...!**

**...ON
THE
SHACKLE
!**

**THE
IRON
BALL...**



DON'T
COME CRYIN'
WHEN I
BEAT YOU
TO A—

**GO
NINE**



WHAT
?!



HONNN!

IT'S
HARDLY A
"STRAIGHT-UP
FIGHT" WITH
YOU IN
SHACKLES.

!

GRRN

HMPH.

THE LEG-
IRONS CAN
COME OFF TOO,
IF YOU LIKE.

YOU...WERE
GOING FOR
THE SHACKLES
TO BEGIN
WITH...!

LET'S
START
OVER.

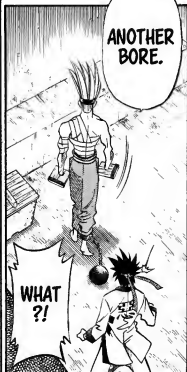
GRRN



...HUNH.

I'LL ANSWER
YOUR
QUESTIONS,
BUT ONLY TO
MAKE YOU
LEAVE.

I CAN'T
STAND
PEOPLE
LIKE YOU.



ANOTHER
BORE.

WHAT
?!



SO THE
OTHER GUY
WON AFTER
ALL!!

!

ALL
RIGHT
THEN,
I'LL
START.



THE
OTHER'S
ABOUT
SHISHIO'S
"KYOTO
DESTRUCTION
PLAN."

TWO
QUESTIONS.

ONE'S
WHAT I
JUST
ASKED
YOU.

Rurouni Kenshin



誠

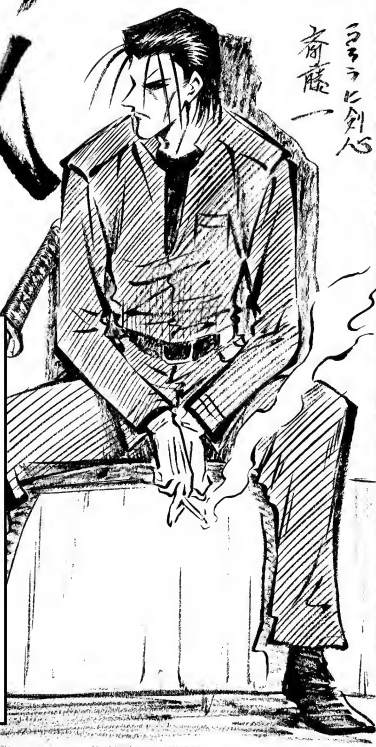
伸宏
和月

るろうに剣心
斎藤一

RUROUNI KENSHIN

SAITŌ HAJIME

Act 93
The
Man
Named
Usui







TWO
OF THE
JUPPONGATANA
COULD DO
IT.

KILLING
50 WELL-
TRAINED
MEN IN ONE
NIGHT.



AND
WHY IS
THAT?!

MEANING,
ANY OF
THE TEN
SWORDS
COULD,
THEN.



WELL...
YOU'RE THE
WEAKEST
OF THEM,
RIGHT?

DONE OVER ONE
NIGHT, AND WITHOUT
WITNESSES. THAT'D
GIVE HIM A ONE-
TO-TWO HOUR
WINDOW.

COULD'VE DONE
IT MYSELF, IF
THERE WEREN'T
A TIME-
LIMIT.

TWO...
THAT'S
NOT TOO
MANY.



ONE OF
THE TWO
IS TENKEN
OR
"HEAVEN'S
SWORD"
SŌJIRO,
THE ONE
WHO'S
ALWAYS
SMILING.

JUST
FINISH
THE STORY,
WILL
YOU...?

I'D
LOVE TO,
BROOM-
HEAD!!

FIGHT
ME,
BIRD-
HEAD!!

WE
HAVE
GOT TO
SETTLE
THIS.



THOUGHT
IT WAS
HIM...



DUNNO IF IT'S
CAUSE OF THAT
OR NOT, BUT
STILL HE'S THE
MOST TRUSTED
OF THE
JUPPONGATANA—
HAND-PICKED
FOR THE ŌKUBO
TOSHIMICHI
ASSASSINATION.



HE'S YOUNG, BUT
HE'S BEEN WITH
SHISHIO THE
LONGEST—GOING
BACK TO THE
DAYS WHEN
SHISHIO'S BURNS
WEREN'T YET
HEALED, AND
HE WAS STILL
FLEEING FROM THE
GOVERNMENT'S
PURSUIT.



**AFTER OKUBO'S
ASSASSINATION,
SOJIRŌ TRAVELED
ALL OVER EASTERN
JAPAN, GATHERING
SHISHIO'S
TEN SWORDS.**

TIME-WISE, HIS ATTACKING KOBE—WHICH OF COURSE IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTRY—WOULD'VE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE.

HE'S
NOT THE
ONE YOU
WANT,
THOUGH.

QUIET,
YOU.

SIZZLE

THEN
WHO
IS IT?!

STOP
STALLING
AND
SPILL.

RE-
MEMBER
YOUR
PLACE!

**VERY DANGEROUS.
DO NOT TRY
AT HOME!**

TO SUMMARIZE,
THERE'S
ANOTHER IN THE
JUPPONGATANA
EQUAL TO SETA
SOJIRO IN
D STRENGTH...

...AND
HE'S
THE
KILLER.

PFF PFF

YEAH,
YOU
GOT IT.

POP



HSSST

**TRUE
ENOUGH.**

...IS THE
MOST
AFRAID.

AND IT'S
HIM, OF ALL
THE TEN
SWORDS, OF
WHOM SHISHIO-
SAMA...

HE'S
NOT
HERE,
EITHER.
HE'S DIS-
APPEARED
!

THE
INTRUDER
IS GONE.
WE'VE
LOST HIM!

I SHALL
SEND OUT
THE JUPPON-
GATANA
FORTHWITH
...SO, ...
PLEASE—
BE PATIENT
A WHILE
LONGER.

WHERE
IS THAT
BOY WHEN
YOU NEED
HIM??

SINCERE
APOLOGIES,
SHISHIO-
SAMA.



I
IMAGINE
HE'S STILL
CLOSE AT
HAND.



AND
SINCE
IT IS
HIM...



WE CAN'T
HAVE THE
TEN SWORDS
FIGHTING
EACH
OTHER.

THERE'S
NO
NEED.

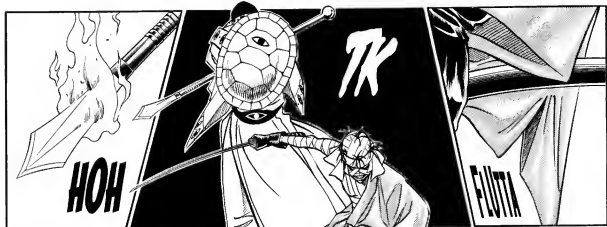


"HIM"
...?

"EACH
OTHER"
...?

CAN
IT
BE...?







USUI,
THE...

...**"BLIND
SWORD."**

MM.
BEFORE THE
REVOLUTION,
HE WAS
A GREAT
SWORDSMAN
HIRED BY THE
GOVERNMENT
AS AN ANTI-
HITOKIRI.

...AND WAS
INSTANTLY
SLASHED IN
BOTH EYES,
LOSING
HIS SIGHT.

HE HUNTED
DOWN MANY
WELL-KNOWN
ASSASSINS.
BUT, ONE
DAY, HE
FOUGHT
AGAINST
SHISHIO-
SAMA...

WHAT
ARE YOU
ANGRY
ABOUT?!

HE'S SINCE BEEN
TRAINING TO TAKE
REVENGE ON SHISHIO-
SAMA, REACHING THE
ULTIMATE FORM
OF KENJUTSU,
"SHINGAN." AND NOW...





IT'S
THOSE TWO
WHO ARE THE
TEN SWORDS'
GREATEST
FOES.



USUI, WAS
THERE A
MAN WITH A
CROSS-SHAPED
SCAR ON HIS
LEFT CHEEK...
...OR A
TALL, THIN,
WOLF-LIKE
MAN IN THAT
GROUP?



AS YOU
YOURSELF
PUT IT...
...WHAT'S
50
SOLDIERS.
GIVE OR
TAKE A FEW?



...SO,
IN THAT
SENSE,
HE'S
SAFER.

BUT NO
WAY SŌJIRO
MOVES
WITHOUT
SHISHIO-
SAMA'S
ORDER...

"TENKEN"
SŌJIRO
AND
"BLIND
SWORD"
USUI...

THOSE
TWO ARE
DEFINITELY
STRONGEST
WITHIN
THE TEN
SWORDS.



...ONCE
YOU THREE
MEET, IT'S
AS GOOD
AS DONE.
AH, THEN
WITH THOSE
TWO...AND
YOU...



SS



...BUT
I'D HAVE
TO SAY
USUI-SAN'S
EVEN
BETTER.

YOU'RE NO
LIGHTWEIGHT
YOURSELF...



ALL
RIGHT,
THE
OTHER
QUESTION.
WE HAVE
WORD
THAT SHISHIO
IS PLANNING TO
DESTROY KYOTO,
BUT WE HAVEN'T
HEARD ANY
DETAILS.

WHAT
IS THIS
PLAN?

INTERESTING
INDEED.

HEH.



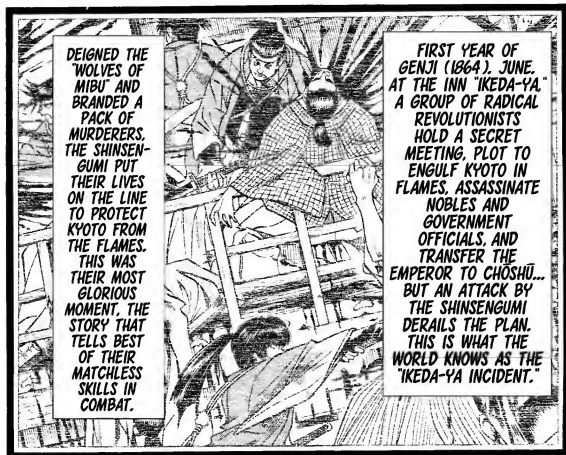


KNOW
ANYTHING
ABOUT
IT?

...THE
IKEDA-YA
INCIDENT.

...I'VE
HEARD OF
IT, YES.

WELL...



DEIGNED THE
"WOLVES OF
MIBU" AND
BRANDED A
PACK OF
MURDERERS,
THE SHINSENGUMI PUT
THEIR LIVES
ON THE LINE
TO PROTECT
KYOTO FROM
THE FLAMES.
THIS WAS
THEIR MOST
GLORIOUS
MOMENT, THE
STORY THAT
TELLS BEST
OF THEIR
MATCHLESS
SKILLS IN
COMBAT.

FIRST YEAR OF
GENJI (1864). JUNE.
AT THE INN "IKEDA-YA,"
A GROUP OF RADICAL
REVOLUTIONISTS
HOLD A SECRET
MEETING, PLOT TO
ENGULF KYOTO IN
FLAMES, ASSASSINATE
NOBLES AND
GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS, AND
TRANSFER THE
EMPEROR TO CHOSHŪ...
BUT AN ATTACK BY
THE SHINSENGUMI
DERAILS THE PLAN.
THIS IS WHAT THE
WORLD KNOWS AS THE
"IKEDA-YA INCIDENT."

AS SOON
AS THE
JUPPON-
GATANA
GATHER,
IT WILL
BE TIME.

A GRAND—
AND HUGELY
IRONIC—
DECLARATION
OF WAR. QUITE
FITTING FOR
SHISHIO-SAMA.
MM?

SO DOES
HE PLOT TO
CARRY OUT
THE HEINOUS
ACT PLANNED
BY THE
PATRIOTS WHO
ENGULFED HIM
IN FLAME.

SETTING
FIRE TO THE
1000-YEAR-
OLD CITY...
THIS TIME,
WITH NO
SHINSEN-
GUMI.

THAT IS
SHISHIO-
SAMA'S
PLAN FOR
KYOTO.

FIVE HUNDRED
SOLDIERS WILL
SIMULTANEOUSLY
CREATE FLAMES
ALL AROUND
KYOTO, BURNING
IT TO THE
GROUND. AT
THE SAME TIME
AND IN THE
MIDST OF THE
CHAOS, THE
JUPPONGATANA
WILL MASSACRE
ANY AND ALL
GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS.

AND
THAT
DAY
NEARS.



EVEN WITHOUT THAT, THIS "CASTLE CITY" IS A SYMBOL OF JAPAN, THE CITY IN WHICH ALL JAPANESE HAVE INVESTED THEIR HEARTS.

IF THE GOVERNMENT CAN'T PROTECT IT, THE PEOPLE'S TRUST WILL PLUMMET.

...BUT, AS THERE'S YET TO BE AN OFFICIAL RELOCATION OF THE CAPITAL, THAT WOULD STILL BE KYOTO.

...I SEE. VERY WELL THOUGHT OUT. OF COURSE, THE EMPEROR HAS MOVED TO TOKYO...

WHO CARES ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT!

YES!

OH, YOU'RE STILL HERE?

THOSE
WHO'LL
SUFFER WILL
BE THE
PEOPLE WHO
LIVE HERE!

THOSE WHO
WILL SUFFER
MOST WHEN
KYOTO BURNS
WILL NOT BE
GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS!

THEY'VE FINALLY
GOT SOME HAPPINESS
AND SAFETY IN THEIR
LIVES, BUT THEIR
"BETTERS" ARE RUINING
IT AGAIN!

BLOODIED
BY THE CHAOS
OF BAKUMATSU,
DESTROYED IN
THE BOSHIN
WAR...

...THEY
HAVE GOT
TO STOP
PLAYING
THESE
GAMES!

SHISHIO
AND THE
REVOLUTIONARY
ISHIN
GOVERNMENT
...



I
SWEAR
IT ON
THE "AKU"
ON MY
BACK...

I WILL
NOT LET
KYOTO GO
UP IN
FLAMES!



I DON'T
CARE
ABOUT
OUR
SCORE...

...BUT
THAT IS
SOME-
THING
THAT
NEEDS
DOING.



SAITŌ!
SETTLING
THE SCORE
WITH YOU
WILL HAVE
TO WAIT.

FIRST
WE HAVE
TO FIND
KENSIN!



...WE MUST
PREVENT
THE
BURNING
OF KYOTO.

TO LET
THE SOULS
OF THE WOLVES
WHO FELL
BENEATH THE
FLAG OF TRUTH
REST IN
PEACE...



...
NOW
WHAT.

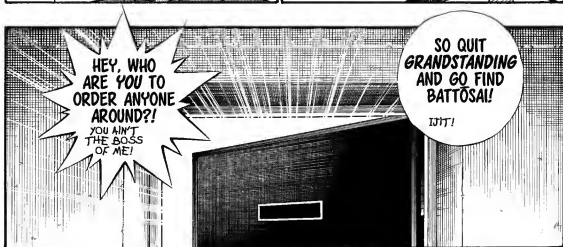


...HMPH.



...WOULD
EVER
AGREE.

IT'S JUST...
I NEVER
THOUGHT
YOU AND
I...



HEY, WHO
ARE YOU TO
ORDER ANYONE
AROUND?!

YOU AIN'T
THE BOSS
OF ME!

SO QUIT
GRANDSTANDING
AND GO FIND
BATTOSAI!

JIJI!

To be continued in Volume 12: The Great Kyoto Fire

GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of *Kenshin*’s sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “Hitokiri Battōsai,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “Battōsai Himura.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Juppongatana

Written with the characters for “ten” and “swords,” Shishio’s Juppongatana are literally that—the ten “swords” or generals he plans to use in his overthrow of Japan

Kamiya Kasshin-ryū

Sword-arts or *kenjutsu* school established by Kaoru’s father, who rejected the ethics of *Satsujin-ken* for *Katsujin-ken*

katana

Traditional Japanese longsword (curved, single-edge, worn cutting-edge up) of the samurai. Used primarily for slashing; can be wielded either one- or two-handed.

Katsujin-ken

“Swords that give life”; the sword-arts style developed over ten years by Kaoru’s father and founding principle of *Kamiya Kasshin-ryū*

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of *Himura Kenshin*

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; sword arts, kendō

kodachi

Medium-length sword, shorter than a *katana*. Its easy maneuverability also makes for higher defensive capability.

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you’re more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the “superior-to-inferior” form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

aku

Kanji character for “evil” worn by Sanosuke as a remembrance of his beloved, betrayed Captain Sagara of the Sekihō Army

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

dojo (dōjō)

Martial-arts training hall

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by *Kenshin*, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

Himura Battōsai

Swordsman of legendary skills and former assassin (*hitokin*) of the *Ishin Shishi*

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s real name

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

shinobi

Another word for "ninja"

Shinsengumi

"True to the old ways and risking their lives to preserve the old *shōgunate* system," the popular view of the *Shinsengumi* ("newly elected group") was that of swordsmen as charismatic as they were skilled

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See *Tokugawa Bakufu*

sukashi

In karate, *sukashi* is defined as "attack-avoiding evasive action"

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of "*Edo*" to "*Tokyo*" is a marker of the start of the *Meiji Restoration*

tonfa

In effect a two-handed weapon (because one is held in each hand), traditional *tonfa*—that is, without ball-bearings or other mechanisms in the handle that allow increased rotation—were a favored weapon among Japanese police of the time, as an officer was said to be able, with relatively little training, to defend himself against unarmed or even (with more training) sword-wielding opponents. In Okina's case, his steel *tonfa* allow him to block Aoshi's nitō-ryū or "double-blade" *kodachi* attacks...although not, unfortunately, forever.

Wolves of Mibu

Nickname for the *Shinsengumi*, so called because of the town (Mibu) where they were first stationed

kunoichi

Female ninja. In that they are not referred to as simply "onmitsu" (ninja), their special name suggests their relative scarcity.

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; *Ishin Shishi*

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the *Tokugawa Bakufu* and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

patriots

Another term for *Ishin Shishi*...and when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

ryūshōsen

Sometimes translated as "Soaring Dragon Flash," the *ryūshōsen* of Kenshin's Hiten Mitsurugi school is one of his special moves, and is also known as "Dragon Flight"

ryūkansen

Also translatable as "Winding Dragon Flash," Kenshin's Hiten Mitsurugi school special move *ryūkansen* is given in here as "Dragon Spiral Strike"

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-dono*. Used to show extreme respect—and when in reference to Shishio—extreme fear.

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as *"-san"*).

Satsujin-ken

"Swords that give death"; a style of swordsmanship rejected by Kaoru's father

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...

As Kenshin looks back to the first, early years of his training at the hand of Hiko Seijūrō, his Hiten Mitsurugi master, the remaining members of the Juppongatana or "Ten Swords" arrive in Kyoto—the first phase of the mad Shishio Makoto's master plan for Japan finally underway. While Misao (now Okashira or "head" of the Kyoto-based spy clan) and the members of her Oniwabanshū onmitsu try and decide how best to prevent Shishio from setting the entire city ablaze, Kenshin, Sano, and Saitō consider their next course of action....



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